1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

867 In this way the child experiences the processes of kinship, entering gradually widening circles of people with concomitant responsibilities and meanings. About the age of seven, for instance, kinship sentiment means running errands for close relatives, borrowing things, helping in carrying presents and gifts for them, and so forth. A child runs errands for his [603] paternal and maternal uncles and grandfathers whether they live with the [604] father or not, whether they are on good terms or not. Beyond these categories of kinship, the child is not compelled to run errands for other relatives who are not in harmony with his parents, on pain of punishment. Through the disciplinary powers of the uncle and the parent's family in general, the child finds himself more drawn towards his mother's people whom he usually goes to visit with his mother, because, as mentioned earlier, he finds them less censorious than paternal relatives. These visits to the maternal relatives are more frequent in the case of adolescent boys who can enjoy a relaxing and more genial relationship in their leisure time at night. As they grow older, kinship for boys and girls means help and assistance on ceremonial events of the extended family and the clan. It is significant to notice that children use only eight terms of address: [601] father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, paternal and maternal uncle and aunt. The last four categories of uncle and aunt are only used when those addressed are married; otherwise they are addressed merely by their [184] first names. In Silwa, unlike many other rural areas in the province of Kena, boys and girls tend, on the whole, to drop these four categories of kinship address after their marriage and usually call their uncles and aunts by their first names. It seems that after marriage boys and girls attain a [885] certain amount of social independence, and thus they do not address [601] uncles and aunts by kinship titles in the same way as they do not address the latter if they are not married, or if the age difference is slight. The recognition of blood relation, however, is usually used as a test for young children by their elders: one might hear an elder questioning a younger, 'Who is your uncle? Who is your cousin? Where do they live? Whom do you prefer?' and so on. The adolescents have a few puzzles depending on [524] kinship terms, and division of inheritance, the solution of which lies in the understanding of a linguistic twist, or a pun.[1]

The child's recognition of the importance of his family and his identification with it is acquired at a very early stage of his development. The child [195] usually talks in the first person plural, by saying 'our donkey, our camel'. In fact, it is preferable to use the plural pronoun rather than the singular, as it is considered to be modest and less presumptuous. This identification with the family is also evidenced by the fact that in children's swearing, and in that of the adults for that matter, the curse is directed towards the father, the mother, the family, or to one's origin (seed). It is very seldom indeed that a curse refers directly to the child or the person addressed. When children are praised by visitors, such praise is couched in terms such

[1] See Appendix VII for boys' riddles.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Seven

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AND GAMES

*851
●524

CHILDHOOD is usually equated with play, and in Silwa it is the only period in which play and games are tolerated. Organized games form the major part of children's play life in Silwa. On very few occasions children engage in constructive or imaginative play by making animals, in the case of boys, or pots and jars in the case of girls, or by constructing a whirlwind toy out of paper and a palm-tree branch. Tin lids attached to a long palm-tree stick are sometimes used as wheeled instruments of play.

A child of about eight or nine years spends an average of an hour a day playing games, decreasing gradually as he grows older. Certain games are favourite in winter because of the physical exertion required helping to provide warmth, while others are more favoured in summer. In our following description of games, examples of the former are Nos. 2, 20, 21, 22, which are exclusively winter games, while Nos. 15, 16, 17 are preferred in summer, being sedentary, but could also be played in winter after playing a strenuous game. Some games by their nature are exclusively night games, such as Nos. 10, 11 and 12, especially on moonlit nights.

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There are no fixed times, however, for play, as children can engage in play whenever they gather in a sufficient number for a game. Sometimes one or two children are seen knocking at the doors of friends, calling upon them to join in a game. Here one sees the expression of reciprocity among children. On many occasions I heard a child blaming another for not coming to join him in play and saying, 'Don't you remember, I played with you the other time you asked me. If you don't come with me now, I won't play with you the next time.'

Immediately a group of children have gathered outside their houses they usually start playing a game. It was observed that most of the younger children or older children accompanying the toddlers would play outside their houses, while unaccompanied older children prefer to play in the recognized 'open spaces' at the edge of the village or where there is wide space between the houses.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AND GAMES

A descriptive account of play situations and games will be given, starting with the play of young children and followed by that of the older.

Young children, from three to five years, are often taken outside the house by their older brothers and sisters (more often by their sisters) who are expected to look after them. They spend most of their time watching the older children playing, and they tend to ape their movements. One often sees a three-year-old, for instance, jumping about, running from one wall to another, or throwing its hands and feet about in movements similar to those of its elders. They can also be heard trying to reproduce the words and cries uttered by the others during the course of their play. Boys from four to six take great delight in playing the engine game. They line up in one row holding each other by the back. As they go forward with quick pace, they start puffing and whistling and trying to hit those who are in their way. One also sees boys of four and five standing in a row playing the game of 'Who urinates furthest?', or urinating on the sand and watching their urine as it makes a stream of water.[1] This is usually played in the absence of any adult spectators.

This age group accompanied by their older sisters takes great interest in any flight of birds, especially in the case of 'Wad el sheikh'—Ibis—which is supposed to be the fellah's friend, for it eats the worms which harm the soil and the crop. On seeing the birds overhead, the young children will twirl round and round, while their sisters clap their hands or drum rhythmically on pieces of tin. They sing together: 'Oh son of Sheikh. Give me a little loaf. Or I shall tell uncle Omara, who will beat his drum.' The children in their little song are actually asking the birds for help, threatening them, in case of failure, to tell uncle to scare them off.

All the organized games from the age of six are entirely for either boys or girls, for mixing between the two sexes never occurs in such games. In spite of the fact that certain games are preferred by younger boys, while others are played more by older boys, there is always that mingling of children of this age group (six to twelve) to a varying degree. For instance, there would be one or two older boys taking the leading part in a game mostly played by young boys.

1. One of the games which is mainly played by boys between five and eight is called 'The game of the mouse' (Li'abat al-far). A group of boys builds a heap of sand or dust around which they sit. The oldest boy is the leader and remains in control throughout the game. He calls out 'The mouse has entered', at the same time inserting his index finger into the heap, and the others immediately do likewise. When he calls out 'The mouse has come out' everyone must withdraw his finger. Any delay in responding to the leader's instructions exposes the child to hits on the body from his playmates till the leader orders them to stop.

[1] See Margaret Lowenfeld, *Play in Childhood*, London, 1935, pp. 114–23, for children's play connected with the experience of urination and defaecation.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

attempt to catch the boy before the latter reaches a base. If he cannot catch the boy, but secures the striking rope, he returns and places this in front of the 'bride'. The striker cannot be 'home' without his rope and therefore must retrieve this. The 'bridegroom' may not attempt to catch the striker until the latter has touched his striking rope. It is a matter of quickness of eye, and running ability. If the 'bridegroom' catches the striker this time, the latter must take his place. If he does not and the striker reaches 'home' with his striking rope, the 'bridegroom' must reseat himself and the next boy then must advance to strike.

14. Another game using a short-length rope is played by a group of boys. All of them stand some distance from a base, and one of their number throws the rope up into the air. Then all the boys scramble to catch hold of it as it falls and the lucky one then turns on the rest to strike whom he can while they are running back to base.

15. A game which involves no physical exertion is called 'Seega with Tab'. The tab is the instrument of scoring, and is made of a palm-tree branch (frond). It is cut a 'span' in length and a 'thumb' wide, one side being green, the other white. Four of these sticks are used in scoring. For playing, two of these sticks are held in each hand, the hands unite to shuffle them, and one hand strikes the sticks on to the other hand to fall on the ground. The scoring depends either on the number of the white sides turned up, one, two, three or four (called an egg), or on all the green sides up, which counts as six. A one must be thrown before scoring can begin, i.e. in the boys' phrase 'One must bring a boy' (a walad). On throwing an opening one the player usually shouts 'This is the boy that thrilled the village' (Walad kharab al balad). In subsequent throws a one allows an extra throw, as also does a four and a six.

With the 'tab' a 'seega', a kind of Ludo, is played by making little holes in the ground in four rows of between usually six to ten holes in a row. These holes are called 'eyes' (Oyun). In each eye of the two outermost rows is placed a piece of stone (called dog), say sandstone for one row, and bits of pottery in the other, to distinguish the dogs of each player. One person or more can play on each side. The scoring is with the tab as already outlined. The main object is to 'eat' the opponent's dog according to the moves of the tab. The dogs can be moved only after scoring a one, they then become 'Moslems' after being 'Christians', and thereupon are called 'brothers' instead of dogs. They move along the inner row on the side nearest their home (dar) and then along the inner row on the opposite side, till it secures a place in the opponent's home. The whole crux of the game depends on a piece or pieces in a hole being moved along to a hole occupied by the opponent's piece or pieces; all these latter are thus 'eaten' and are removed from the game. The one who manages to 'eat up' all his opponent's pieces first is the winner.

16. Another game scored by the 'tab' sticks is called 'The rule of the whip' (Hukm Kurbag). At least five boys are required to play this game

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

*857
●524

properly. These things are necessary for the game: a palm-tree branch (used as a cane), a ring of rope and a very small stick. The player cannot participate in the benefits of the game until he scores a one and the person is thus 'sweetened'. Further scores are: six for a 'Sultan' who holds the ring of rope, four for a 'Minister' (vizir) who holds the cane, and three ones for the small stick.[1] Directly a Sultan and a Minister are scored, the former can command the latter to beat any 'unsweetened' boy with the cane (usually from one to ten strikes on the soles of the feet). The small stick, when it is scored, is the 'stick of mercy' and the holder can lessen any of the Sultan's penalties. As the game continues, the different symbols of command, execution and mercy change hands according to the tab scorings and thus give ample chance for retaliation, conspiracy and altercation.

17. The third game in which scoring is by 'tab' is called 'Burial' (Dafn). It is a simple game for which the participants sit in a circle. Whoever first scores three ones—sometimes the rule is consecutively, at other times cumulatively—buries the tab sticks in the ground. The player who preceded the winner must then attempt to get the sticks out by using his chin to remove the soil and his teeth to extract the sticks. This takes place amidst the jeers and words of humiliation from the whole of the group.

18. Another type of Seega is played without 'tab' scoring, where a square of five rows of five holes (Khimasiyah), or seven rows of seven holes (Sibaiyah) is made on the ground. Each player, in the case of 'Khimasiyah', has twelve 'dogs', each dozen of different material—crockery bits, stone or dried pellets of camel-dung. The players agree on who shall 'throw' first. The first player puts two of his pieces in any two of the holes except the centre hole into which no piece may be put at this stage. The other player follows by putting two of his pieces where he will. In this way both players place their pieces in all the twenty-four holes, and the centre hole is left for the first move, which is played by the last person who placed his pieces. He moves any one of his pieces adjacent to the centre hole, into the centre hole, and his opponent follows by moving any of his pieces adjacent to the vacated hole, into it. The aim is to get pieces in holes immediately adjacent either side of the opponent's piece, whereupon the surrounded piece is 'eaten' and thrown out of play. The winner is the one who is left with three pieces to the opponent's one.

For example, if player 'A' move his (o) dog to the centre hole (as indicated by the lined arrow) he would be able to 'eat' the 1 and 2 (x)s. Player 'B' would then move his dog to the vacated hole (as shown by the dotted arrow) and could eat 3, 4 and 5 (o)s, as he is allowed to return to his former position if he could 'eat' by such a move.

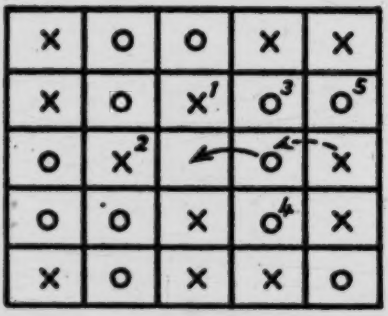
One of the significant features about 'Seega' is that, though it is an individual game, it is usually, whether played by boys or adults, an attraction for a gathering, everybody giving his advice as to the best move. This

[177]

[1] A residue of the Ottoman rule in Egypt seems to reflect itself in this game.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

is accepted by the players as part of the enjoyment of the game, for it is held that the 'seega' is not chaste.



19. One rarely passes the village during the day without seeing boys playing the game of 'Awal-Hawal' ('Awal' means first, and 'hawal' means change, though here it is probably a rhyming addition). The game is also called 'First faeces'. There are teams playing with a ball, called 'Jal-loud', usually improvised with pieces of old cloth, though sometimes of rubber, and a striking post, which is a piece of stone set up on the ground. One team 'fields' whilst the other team have their 'innings', one at a time. The boy who is 'in' stands with his back to the fielders, and faces the striking post. He throws up the ball and on its descent hits it back behind him. This first hit is called 'Awal' (one). If any of the fielders catch it, the player is out. Otherwise, whoever retrieves it is allowed to aim at the striking post, from where he found the ball. If he strikes the post, the player is out, and another member of his team takes over. If the fielder fails to hit the post, then the player strikes the ball again, saying 'Tani' (second), and so on, if he can, to the third striking called 'Abu' (father). If he succeeds in not being caught out, or the retriever has not hit the post, then he turns his face to the fielders and strikes the ball towards them with his hand. If he succeeds three times in this way in remaining 'in', he kicks the ball towards the fielders—he is allowed three kicks in all, provided he remains 'in'. There are nine possible strikings of the ball by the players who are 'in' to score 'a donkey', or another three added if they want to have 'a donkey ride' on their opponents. In the case of the latter, the two captains do not take part in 'the donkey riding' and play by themselves. The 'ride' of the winning team lasts for as long as their captain is not 'out'. Directly the captain is 'out' the two teams change places. One of the most important rules in this game is the strict observance of the order of striking the ball, and to make a mistake in calling out the sequence is to be declared 'out' by the other team saying 'You are jumped over' (Hub alaik).

20. 'Shattat Battat' is a very similar game to 'Awal-Hawal'. It is played

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

shelter' (a woman's phrase). Otherwise he has to push up the legs of his 'squeezers' and thus by loosening them he can escape.

23. A form of wrestling is indulged in by boys to test each others' strength, or settle an argument. The boys embrace each other, one arm passing round the shoulder; thus, both have an equal hold. The aim is to throw the opponent on his back. Arms in the holding position are only to be used to exert pressure, and legs can be used to trip the opponent to fall on his back. The winner declares his victory by announcing that 'he has brought so-and-so's back to the ground'. This struggle is sometimes the result of a climax in argument and threats, when one challenges the other to 'come outside' for a 'Sirai', so that they can struggle without interference from others.

These are practically all the games played by the boys, and now the girls' games will be described. A typical game for girls is called 'Tugul' (weights), which is similar to 'fivestones' played in Europe, except that in this case 'marbles' are used instead of cubes. The preparation of these little balls entails a good deal of work in shaping and smoothing pieces of sandstone, and sometimes pottery, to about half an inch in diameter. The game is usually an individual game played normally by two girls. The first play is to grasp the five 'marbles' (ten in the case of older girls) in the hand and throw them up in such a way as to intercept their fall on the ground with the back of the hand—the purpose being to scatter the marbles haphazardly. The second play is to throw up one marble, and grasp a second, catching the first as it falls. The caught 'marble' is then put aside and the remaining marbles are to be grasped in the same way during the throwing up of the first marble. The third stage is exactly the same except that two marbles must be picked up at each throw; the fourth stage entails grasping three and then one, at each throw. The final stage is to place the marbles on the back of the hand, to throw them up and grasp them all, while they fall. If at any stage the marble is not grasped, or the thrown one is not caught, or, if in the final stage all the marbles are not caught, the girl loses her turn to the other. When picking a marble, no other marble must be touched.

The game therefore requires a degree of skill and co-ordination, e.g. in the choice of marble to pick up, and in the arrangement of marbles on the back of the hand. It is a game at which girls of ten spend hours, and is enjoyed by both young and older girls. After the game is finished the girls usually dig a hole in the ground to keep their marbles for further play.

The second game is a girls' version of the 'Seega' played by boys, of four rows of four holes, and is played by four girls, two on each side. The two rows nearest each team are their 'home' rows. Two girls sit opposite the other two and one side starts. The girl on the left places her left hand behind her back and grasps the left hand of her partner, who is seated on her right. Thus both girls have their right hands free. The first girl sings a ditty, punctuating the words by putting her index finger in each hole.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

[P.154]

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AND GAMES

*857 ● 524 The ditty goes on like this: 'Boos, Boos, daughter of Hussain the afflicted, has filled my thoughts at midday (when the sun is hottest). May God fill her thoughts.' The idea is to squeeze a finger of the hand held behind her back while pointing to a particular hole. Thus the two playing girls choose a hole without the other side knowing which one it is. Then the girl whose finger was squeezed hides herself behind the back of her partner, merely by leaning over sideways. The opposite team has three guesses as to the hole chosen. If they guess correctly the turn passes to them. If they do not guess correctly the girl who was hiding reappears to confirm that by showing them the correct hole. The idea of her being separated from her partner is to prevent collusion. In this case, one girl from the successful side spits into one of the 'home' rows of her opponents. The hole is then closed by throwing in some earth. The aim of the game is to close all the holes of the opponents' rows. The first side to do this has won.

*857 A very popular play situation with girls is the representation of some of the adult female occupations and ceremonies. This would involve making straw figures, bedecked in bits of cloth as men or women and children, and with the help of stones, building a house.[1] All the details of an event or ritual are played out in a make-believe way. Thus marriage, circumcision, cooking, and social meetings are all imitated.

524 526 The adult world is almost entirely deprived of organized games. Men play the 'Seega' (No. 19[illegible] only, and on ceremonial occasions 'Hatab', which is a form of fencing played by two persons, each holding a thick stave (nabbout) of about six or seven feet long, each player trying to strike the other on his body. Women have no organized games of any sort, not even those played by the girls.

*857 517 In a sociological analysis of play situations and games it is appropriate to refer to the attitude of adults towards play. The notion of a 'dignified man' as a social ideal, contrasts with that of a man who plays. This reflects the marked dichotomy between the adult world which is considered to be serious, busy and involved in social happenings, and the children's world which, being considered transitory, uneconomic, and even frivolous, is in most cases despised by the sober adults. To describe a grown-up's action as 'childish play' is to condemn it, and such a phrase is highly offensive and might lead to bitter altercation, even blows.

Thus one can hardly find any adult who shows any interest, much less enthusiasm, in children's play and games. Indeed, it would be unbecoming in an adult. If a group of men happens to gather near some children playing, the children immediately realize the situation and have to withdraw somewhere else; otherwise they will expose themselves to a scolding or a missile directed at them. Whatever adults do, is work, for it is only children who play. Yet this does not mean that they have no leisure; they 517 spend it in exchanging news, gossip, tea and coffee drinking and visiting

[1] By the time they reach adolescence girls are expected to have made a sufficient number of dolls to be used as a decoration for their marital homes.

* [The author apparently means No. 18, See Category 116, pp. 150-151--Analyst]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

is instilled in the child's mind at a very early stage, not only after it knows how to walk confidently, but even as a toddler, when his older sister or brother carries him outside the home to sit or crawl around while others play.

[118] Ali, my informant, commented that children have less scope and time for play than they used to. He added: 'The days of children's play have gone, and nowadays even the suckling has to worry about getting a living.

[841] Since the introduction of perennial irrigation the people have cultivated the land "from the sea to the mountain". Yet they have no "baraka" (blessedness); they have become more greedy and less godly.'[1] The relation between perennial irrigation and the diminishing periods of children's play did not strike the writer as a plausible explanation at first. After further enquiry, however, the real significance became clearer. In the days of 'basin irrigation', with the exception of attending to the water-wheel, most of the irrigation work was done by the grown-ups, as the water was more difficult to obtain and therefore more valuable. At present, actual irrigation of land is mainly the boys' task, as besides the abundance of water, it does not involve more than removing the 'lid' from the opening (siyala) between the canal and the field. Moreover, during basin irrigation very much less manure was needed to fertilize even the same size of land tenure, which meant more time for children's play.

● [524] [369] The influence of urban life has reflected itself in some of the sedentary games of the adults. On the market day especially, villagers who frequent the town or have worked there, can be seen playing a kind of 'draughts' (dumnah), or kind of 'trictrac' (tawlah) or cards. Because this type of play depends on 'chance' it does not win social approval, as all 'hazardous'

[525] play is 'Kumar' (betting) which is religiously forbidden. On the other hand, children's play has not felt the impact of urban influences and one cannot find even manufactured dolls in the hands of children.

In the sociological analysis, the emphasis has been chiefly on the part that child play performs in the formation or expression of social attitudes, habits and skills and the ways of acquiring what is in Malinowski's phrase 'the basic grammar of the culture pattern'. Although for certain purposes the social and the psychological approaches can be separated, it is essential in the treatment of play situations to apply both. While one must examine the reflection of social norms in play, one must also consider the manipulation of the psychological forces, e.g. giving vent to aggression or the importance of parent-child relationship, in the process of growing-up as expressed in children's play. With the full realization that neither the social-cognitive, nor the psychological-symbolic significance, is by itself the real meaning of play, the latter aspect will now be discussed.

There are various theories that purport to explain play. Here we are not concerned with identifying ourselves with any of those theories advanced by Herbert Spencer, Stanley Hall, Karl Groos, or Sigmund Freud.

[1] Such a statement contains the elements of cynicism and puritanism which sometimes colour Ali's information.

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Appendix Seven

BOYS' RIDDLES

(mainly in the adolescent stage)

539
529 'One measure of clover covering this world and the hereafter.'
Answer: (Stars.)

'Something which looks like a man's covering which is woven neither by a Moslem nor by a Christian.'
(Loofah.)

'How many cups are in the sea?'
(The sea is that of knowledge and contains four cups which are the four schools of Moslem theology: the schools of Malik, Al Shafii, Abu Hanifa, and Ibn Hanbal.)

'How many "Kintars" are there in the "mountain"?'
(The mountain here is the Koran, so the mountain contains 114 'Kintars', as the Koran consists of 114 chapters.)

'How many "Kasabas"[1] are there in the universe?'
(There are fourteen 'Kasabas' in the universe: seven heavens and seven earths.)

'A tree that contains twelve branches and on every branch there are thirty leaves.'
(The lunar year—in fact, however, the lunar months are of thirty and twenty-nine days alternately.)

'Riding his mother and protected by his father.'
(The bullet in a gun.)

'A cripple who walks, a blind man who sees, a barren person who is pregnant, if she continues to be thirsty she survives, and with her the child she bears, but if she drinks, she dies and with her dies her child.'
(The laden boat at sea.)

'A boy and his sister, and a wife and her husband, amongst whom one distributes three oranges, each one getting a whole orange.'
(The sister of the boy is at the same time the husband's wife.)

'There was a wolf, a ram and some clover, and a man wanted to take

[1] A Kasaba is a length measure of 335 centimetres.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

them across from one side of the river to the other, provided he takes only one of them at a time. How could he manage that without losing any of these things, e.g. letting the wolf eat the ram, or the ram eat the clover?' 539 524

(He takes the ram first to the other bank and leaves it there. Then takes the wolf, leaving it there, taking the ram back with him to where it was. Then takes the clover across to the other side, leaving it beside the wolf, and returning to fetch the ram.)

'Our white camel scatters its feeding-stuff,
Our black camel gathers its feeding-stuff.'

(White camel is daytime when people disperse for work, whereas the black camel represents night when people gather for chatting.)

'The land is white, the sowing seeds are black, the cows are five, and the plough is one.'

(This is a representation of the hand (five fingers) writing in ink (black sowing seeds) with a pen (one plough) on a white sheet of paper (white land).)

'A boy with scabies rubs his head on another scabby head, and from too much rubbing the heads fall down piece by piece.'

(The upper and lower stones of a handmill grinding flour.)

'Ninety knights who run in one vessel.'

(The two wheels of the water-wheel, the upper horizontal wheel containing fifty teeth, and the lower vertical one containing forty, and both being in the well.)

'A white billy-goat, with red ears.'

(The 'maktaf' (basket) made of whitish palm-tree leaves, with two handles made of brownish palm-tree fibre.)

'Shakes his head while filling his belly.'

(The spindle.)

'Abuyah kitir malu
'ala akhti katabnalu
al bit jabat walad ya zein af'alu
baga abuyah, wibn akhti wana khalu.'
'Abuyah has plenty of money.
We've got him wed to my sister.
She had a child, who's done himself well.
He's the brother of Yah (Akhuyah), he's my cousin and I'm his maternal uncle.'

(Here the play is on the words Abuyah (first line) and Akhuyah (fourth line), where the former word means 'Father of Yah' and 'my father' and the latter word means 'brother of Yah' and 'my brother'.)

1 A [apparently this should read Akhuyah -- analyst]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all these *mawālid*, and those who sold them attracted a considerable number of customers. These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawālid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game.

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Umbārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet

[Text continues on p. 255]

coloured language. More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (11)

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah! Allah!" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again.

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support.

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *zummara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is no peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard.

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence.

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found.

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (12)

donkey to the fields and the *gamoosa* to the canal, where he climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole village belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at *sîga*, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The 1923 Constitution decreed that education should be compulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun to take effect. Schools are being established all over the countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages, schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places that within living memory had never seen a teacher are provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child population will be receiving instruction (*[1]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers and wounded them. The peasants care little for education. They only want their children to help them to increase their earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him and teaches them the Koran.

857 [524] 852 872 656 [212] 177 871 183 579 871 794

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. In the words of El-Kolâly, his mind is walled-in between ignorance and tyranny. (65)

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long-suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. As El-Kolâly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant home life, a good table, light company — these are things beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. They are material, but not materialistic. They believe wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawâga*, (66) *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

Another such enterprise is the holiday scheme of five young Egyptian women at Kolossona in Upper Egypt (*). "Two cousins of mine, my two sisters and myself", says one of them, whose report we are quoting, "opened our little school at the beginning of July 1933. The Government school was too far from the village and on the other side of a dangerous level-crossing. Our premises, which consist of two rooms kindly lent by a lady, are in the middle of the village. 747 872

"When the school was opened, apparatus and supplies were quite inadequate. In spite of this we set to work and took sixty children, mostly girls, between six and seventeen years of age. At first, keeping order was troublesome, but little by little things improved.

"We taught reading and writing, manual work, and games. The roll was called every morning.

"By giving prizes for regularity, we kept up attendances to 70%. The following year, when we had 170 on our books, the percentage was 80.

"We made real progress in both reading and writing, and still more in cleanliness. Sham jewellery disappeared, faces were washed every morning, and the children kept their hair clean. An anti-fly campaign was organised.

"Every day we used to put eyes, drops in the children's and children with serious trouble were sent to the oculist. On Friday, though there was no school, the children came for a health inspection, and were given a cake of soap and some hair-wash. [757]

"We gave the boys drawing-lessons, in which we had to teach them how to distinguish colours, and the girls sewing-lessons, in which we showed them how to make dresses.

"We found difficulty at first in organising games, but it was not very long before the children began to understand and keep the rules." [524]

This experiment lasted for three years. Unfortunately it came to an end with the departure of young women who had undertaken it.

The experience of school teachers with their pupils, and of landowners with their tenants or share-croppers, teaches them that the progress or regression of the fellah depends largely on themselves. Some make real efforts 747

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *balo*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candelabra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot, high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground; some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-